

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

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UNCLAS TOKYO 14277

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TAGS: TBIO, JA
SUBJECT: JAPAN'S MEDICAL AID PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPING
NATIONS

1. AS ONE OF ITS MAJOR NEW PROGRAMS, MINISTRY OF HEALTH
AND WELFARE PLANS TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTING AN "INTERNATIONAL
MEDICAL CARE COOPERATION CENTER" IN TOKYO. THE COST,
ESTIMATED AT 3 BILLION YEN, WILL BE INCORPORATED IN THE
MINISTRY'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR JFY 1979.

2. THE CENTER, STAFFED BY 200 DOCTORS, NURSES AND
SUPPORTING STAFF, WILL BE ENGAGED IN DISPATCHING MEDICAL
PERSONNEL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, CONDUCTING RESEARCH
AND INVESTIGATION ON DISEASES AND THE STATE OF MEDICAL
CARE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND TRAINING MEDICAL
PERSONNEL FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE MINISTRY HOPES
THAT THE CENTER WILL BEGIN ITS ACTIVITIES IN JFY 1981.

3. THE DEMAND FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FOR JAPANESE
MEDICAL PERSONNEL HAS GROWN YEAR AFTER YEAR. IN
RESPONSE, THE NUMBER OF JAPANESE DOCTORS DISPATCHED TO
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DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAS INCREASED AT THE RATE OF ABOUT
30 PERCENT A YEAR. ABOUT 220 DOCTORS WERE SENT ABROAD
IN JFY 1977. SIMILARLY, THE NUMBER OF TRAINEES RECEIVED
BY JAPAN HAS INCREASED AT THE RATE OF 20 PERCENT A YEAR,
OR ABOUT 350 TRAINEES IN JFY 1977. WHILE DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES EXPECT JAPAN TO DISPATCH DOCTORS ON ASSIGNMENTS
OF ONE TO TWO YEARS, MOST JAPANESE DOCTORS STAY ABROAD

FOR SHORTER PERIODS OF TIME. (JAPAN'S LIFETIME EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY DOCTORS TURNING DOWN OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS BECAUSE OF CONCERN ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS AFTER RETURNING TO JAPAN. IN ORDER TO ALLAY THIS CONCERN, MHW HAS DECIDED THAT ALL MEDICAL PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE CENTER WILL BE CLASSIFIED AS NATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS PERSONNEL AND WILL BE GUARANTEED REEMPLOYMENT IN THEIR ORIGINAL POSITIONS UPON RETURNING FROM OVERSEAS.)

4. MHW SURVEY SHOWS THAT JAPAN'S MEDICAL AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAS BEEN QUITE INADEQUATE IN THE PAST: IN 1976, IT AMOUNTED TO ONLY \$7.7 MILLION, COMPARED WITH \$261.6 MILLION BY FRANCE, \$167.1 MILLION BY THE U.S., \$129.6 MILLION BY THE NETHERLANDS, AND \$26.8 MILLION BY SWEDEN. THIS IS ONE OF THE COMPELLING REASONS BEHIND MHW PLAN TO INCREASE JAPANESE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, HOW THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE WILL RESPOND TO THE MHW REQUEST FOR FUNDS LATER THIS YEAR REMAINS TO BE SEEN. MOF IS NOT KNOWN FOR ITS GENEROSITY IN PROVIDING UNTIED ASSISTANCE TO LDC'S. MANSFIELD

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